

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Hurry Up & Slow Down

PART

3

TITLE

Creating Margin

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:15-21



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If this is your first or maybe your 50th time, I know it's natural to look around and sort of wonder how you fit in. Well, we exist as a church family to seek to glorify the Lord, and we do that by introducing people to Jesus Christ. That's the great love of our life, and then to take those people who know Christ and to grow them up to love and worship him.

We all have a step in that process. Every single one of us is somewhere in moving towards that. At Providence, to help you find that step so that you can contribute, and use your gifts, and use your time, and leverage them towards eternal purposes, things that God has called all of us to do, we've created a little simple pathway with four steps. We want you to connect, and to grow, and to serve, and to go. Each week what we do, after this service we want to have just a moment with you. It's just a onetime that if you would like to know how you can use your gifts to serve at Providence, then we invite you to that time.

Time is something that we all care about. This month we've been looking at it in a series called Hurry Up and Slow Down. Every single one of us, we look at our clock all the time. That clock back there says it's 9:55 and 44, 45 seconds, 46, 47. Time continues to move. In fact, when I stand here, I can see the clock move one after another after another second or minute.

You know what's interesting is we normally look at a clock and it's always a reference point for something in the future. If we have something at 10:00, we think, "Oh, now it's only 45 minutes. Now it's only 35 minutes. Now it's only 20 minutes." It's a good thing we do that, because it'd be really, really discouraging if we did it the other way, which is basically every time you looked at your clock and you said, "Hey, I just lost another five minutes of life, and another 10 minutes of life, and another two hours of life," and yet that's precisely what's taking place. Time moves, and once time moves past, it's irretrievable.

Time is like a great big train that's stuck in low gear. You can't stop it, you can't stand before it, but if you have margin in your life, you have time, you see. You can get ahead and you can switch the tracks in order to divert that time into areas of priority. Margin is what we call it. Margin is simply space. It's the space on the outside of your Bible page, or it's the space on the outside of my note page, or it's the space between a one point victory and an 18 point victory and all of the emotions that are different in those two experiences. It's the space. What we find in life is that margin is the space to evaluate, it's the space needed to think, it's the space needed to make decisions, and then it's the space needed to be able to switch the tracks so that the locomotive of our time can be diverted into areas of priority instead of areas of waste.

We want to look at this of margins, and in particular how God would inform our life and how to live our life so that margins can actually help us and free us up to be able to experience all that God has for us. If you would, would you bow and let's pray together.

Father, we look to you now for help. The fact is, is we simply don't need a word from me. We want a word from you, and we need one. You have told us that if we will lean upon you,, and acknowledge you, and trust you, that you'll direct our paths, and that's what we need. Would you speak through weakness, and would you speak through your Word, and would you speak through all the distractions, and would you speak through our weariness, and would you speak through all the resistance of our skepticism and pride and unbelief, and would you help us to see that what you have for us here is good? We look to you in faith, ask that you would do amazing things in our hearts through your Word, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

In your Bible, I would love for you to turn with me to Ephesians chapter 5. This is the third of four sermons in the series, and so I want to do a little recap in case you're new with us or in case you have forgotten. In the first week, we looked at Psalm 90, and what we looked at there is that every single one of us, we have a life. We're created in the image of God with importance, and he's eternal, and yet we are not.

Every single one of us, we have a jar and it's of different sizes. Some of you are going to live 40 years. Some of you going to live 80 years. So of you are going to live 70 years, and you don't get to determine how many those are. Psalm 139 says that God has ordained the days before one came to be how many we're going to have on the earth. Every one of us, we have a jar or a life, things that it's a certain size and we get to fill it up, but every single one of us, the jar of our life is a little different in size. Okay? That's what we looked at the first time.

That being the case, what Psalm 90 says is, "God, would you teach us to number our days so that we would have a heart of wisdom? Would you help us to see we're not going to be here forever so that we can live with some urgency and importance and priority in life?" Well, the fact is, is there's lots of different things that you can use to fill your life with differing levels of significance and importance. There some things that are this larger jar with these larger rocks that have greater significance. Normally, these are the things that we look at. They're typically relationships. They're the big rocks of our life. They're the things that make us who we are, that we can't part with, that we don't want to part with. In fact, if we do part with or if we economize on this jar and fill up our life with this jar, we live with regret. We don't ever want to do that.

This jar is less significant, and yet there's still things that must be done. If you have a pet, you need to clean your pet. Okay? You don't want that to necessarily be the legacy of your life at your funeral, "You know, he kept a really clean dog. Just it was so clean all the time." Like yeah, that's good. You should take care of your pet if you have one, but the fact is, is there's more significant things for God, for your life that God has planned than to keep a clean pet on this earth.

Then there are certain things that really are not significant at all. They're the little BBs, and typically these are the things that fill up all the margins in our life where we say, "I just have no time for the people in my life. I have no time for the biggest things in life. I have no time for what I feel like God's calling me to do." Typically when we look, it's because the margins are filled with things of very little significance.

What we looked at last week is there's simply too many people, there's too many responsibilities, there's too many time wasters for it to all fit. There's no way for you to organize all of this material into this one jar, and the same it is with our life, and so we have to make choices.

We looked last week at the importance of seeking God first. Something has to go in first that's going to inform all the rest. We looked last week that if we would seek the Lord, not only would we live up to our highest potential, but we would feel the greatest pleasure and he would inform the rest of the things that need to be added to our life.

When we come to Ephesians chapter 5, Paul is writing a church in Ephesus. We're a church in Raleigh. He's writing a group of people who have trusted Jesus Christ. In the first three chapters of his letter to them, he recounts God's amazing grace in their life and how grace transforms the heart, makes us alive where once we were spiritually dead, how he changes us internally. He reconstitutes our nature, gives us the capacity to live in all different ways, all new ways, loving ways instead of selfish ways. Then chapters 4, 5, and 6, what he does is he says, "Now if this is the case and if this is true, then how do we, the people of God, the church of God put this into practice in the different areas of priority in our life?"

It's in that context that we read these words in Ephesians 5 starting in verse 15. He says, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery. But be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Now, you look at those first several verses and it's a barrage of urgent instructions. Paul sounds like he's in a plane with a bunch of soldiers just about to drop out of the plane in order to go into battle. These sound like last instructions in urgent matters. Things like look carefully, be wise, redeem the time, the days are evil, know the plan, be sober. This is what you expect. This is what you want to hear. This is what you need to hear when you're about to be flung into a urgent matter like war.

But then it's interesting versus 18, 19, 20, and 21, it's as if the war is over and we're now at home sitting by the fire with our families, singing to one another and to the Lord after an amazing Thanksgiving dinner. You notice that these things are happening simultaneously. He never said do this so that you can enjoy this. He just starts and there's just a barrage of thoughts. This is what this means. Okay? The first half is the hurry up, the second half is the slow down, and they happen in life simultaneously.

Some of you, when you hear the phrase, hurry up and slow down, what you hear is if I hurry up, I can live the rest of my life slowing down like on a hammock on the beach, uninterrupted life, just careless and carefree, and that is not what the Bible gives. What the Bible gives is an idea that the hurry up of life, that there's an urgency to life and there's also a peace and a slowdown in life in these two things. They feed off of each other, and they do so simultaneously easily until we die.

The question I want to answer is, how does God help us live in this tension and how do margins help us do so? How does eliminating wasteful things in our life allow us to be able to live within this tension between hurry up, this is urgent, and slow down, and enjoy, and be thankful, care for one another? I'm going to show you just a few truths here.

The first is this, is that God urges us to recognize the brokenness in the world. God urges us to recognize the brokenness in the world. You see, Paul explains the intensity of his initial commands, that barrage of urgency, with five simple words, because the days are evil. You see it. "Look carefully how you walk. Don't be unwise. Be wise. Make the best use of the time." Why? "Because the days are evil."

They are evil. You see, the train that is our life, the time of our life, it chugs through broken fields of people. Today in the world, prisons and hospitals are packed. Temptation and shame are overwhelming. Racial hostility is simmering. Abortion centers are busy. Around the world today, people are hungry, people are homeless, people are cold, people are trafficked, people are exploited. Around the world today, there is brokenness everywhere that we see, and people are dying around the world without any knowledge that the sin that they are trying to cover has been died for already and they can be forgiven of their sin if they hear and trust of Jesus Christ. What this means is that the train of their lives is chugging towards hell. That all of those minutes and moments of life when they look at the clock to say, "Hey, I can't wait for this, and I can't wait for this," and they get older, and older, and older, they're moving closer to destruction.

You know, there's 100,000 people within a 20 minute drive of where you're sitting right now who do not know the Lord and they have no affiliation whatsoever with a church. Estimates say that there's another 150,000 people that are going to move within a 20 minute drive of where you're sitting right now in the next 10 years, and many of them do not know Christ.

When we looked at Psalm 90 and he says, "Look, if we could simply see the impact of our sin upon a just God, and if we could see the brevity of life and the length of eternity, oh, we would recognize the importance of our days." Here's the deal. For those who are apart from Christ, who've never read Psalm 90, it's the people of God who were supposed to wait, feel the weight on their behalf when they can't because they don't know. The people around the world today that literally try to shut itself onto trains in order to get from one place to the next, they don't know that they can be forgiven. All of this brokenness that is taking place around the world, what Paul is saying is this, is that this should affect the way that we live.

Let me encourage you to consider our calling as we create margins. See, if you don't know Jesus Christ as your savior, let me just say that Jesus is the hope, not a hope. He is the hope, the only hope for your life. The only hope for the exploited. He's the only hope in the world to stop trafficking. He's the only hope. He's the only hope for people without a coat and people without food. It's Jesus Christ working through people.

You have a sin problem before him. If there's a sin problem that's not been dealt with, it means that there's a separation between you and the greatest joy of your life. He came in order to rescue you by sending his son, Jesus, who lived, and he died, and he rose again. Would you trust him today?

For those of us in the room who have, don't you understand that we have a calling, an actual calling upon us? That we are being called to follow a man, a king, a savior who didn't stay in the comforts but came to the broken fields. He didn't sit on his couch and heckle Fox News and tell people, "Just go get a job." He came to the earth, to the field in order to make you whole and me. This is who we're following.

He tells us in Ephesians chapter 5, he says, "Be imitators of God." That's our calling as beloved children. That means if you've known Jesus Christ as your savior, you have been adopted as a son or daughter into his family, and therefore now you have a calling to represent our Father.

How do we imitate him? What does he say? "Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us." You see, this is the calling of our life. I hope ... God help us. I hope that you know that this series on time, it's not been built so that to help you organize a tidy, self-absorbed, uninterrupted lives. It's been built to help us to imitate Jesus Christ, to bring redemption and maybe a coat and a warm meal to people who are in need around the whole world, and having the margin in our life to be able to do so when the need arises.

In this world that we live in, you have to ask yourself this question. This is what I've asked this weekend repeatedly. Did my week and how I spent my time this week resemble the urgency of the world in which I live? Would someone be convinced if they looked at your life this week that people are in peril? That is what the series is about. It's not hammock living. It's he is on a mission to redeem people, and the redeemed and rescued are added to the rescue team.

He urges us to recognize the brokenness in the world. The second thing he urges us to do is to understand his will for our life. You see, this is his world, his big, beautiful world. It's not our world. It's his. When we ignore him, you know what happens? We get lost, and when we get lost, we tend to live really fast. We join a lot. We do a lot. We add a lot. We stay busy, and this is why.

You see, if we ignore God, what happens is we become distant from God. When you're distant from God, you're distanced from your greatest joy, and so you start feeling like you're hollow, like there's a hole. You feel like that, "You know what? I just feel so far away from him." Sometimes people say, "Well, I just kind of feel fake right now."

How do you know? Here's a few ways. When the clearest, greatest, most intense prayers that you ever pray are prayed only in front of other people, there's a problem.

This hollowness, what it does is we know we're missing something, but if our back is turned to God, we have to fill it with something. We begin to feel this tremendous pressure to fill it, and so we get very, very busy. But our busy is a busy barrenness, and what that means is that we just invest and we do so many things, and we spend a week, and then we spend a month, and then we spend a year, yet we look back and we go, "What did I do? What was the point of it all?"

We become like a mime on the stage of history that has all kinds of movement but no meaning whatsoever. We feel fake and hollow. You know what this does is it creates within us this sense of angst that causes us to pull back and escape from the very things that are going to help us. We begin to numb ourself. We begin drinking a lot, or scrolling a lot, or watching movies a lot, or watching sports a lot, or doing a lot of totally insignificant things. We just do a lot of it, because we're simply too busy.

This is what happens. It's sort of crazy. We say, "Hey, why don't you come to church instead of watching on livestream?" They're like, "Man, I'm too busy." Those of you here, why don't you invest another hour and go to a life group where people are going to know you, people are going to hold you accountable, people are going to pray for you? You know what happens? People say, "But man, I'm just so busy." Sometimes people really are busy, but a lot of times the busyness is just escapism, and they leave this place and instead of going to life group, they go and scroll for an hour. For some reason, this just feels so much more significant. It feels like a better usage of time for whatever reason.

Yet what it does, all of this does, a life that's days of this broken distance, busy barrenness turns into a week, it turns into months, and sometimes it turns into years and even decades. What it does is it creates this sense of regret, because this kind of life, it leaves people in a wake. We begin to exploit people and use people in order to fulfill something within us that only the creator of the universe can fulfill.

I tell you all this because it's all wrapped up in the words, "Therefore, do not be foolish." Your life is so important. Did you know that through your life, somebody on this earth could move from death to spiritual life? You're so important. He can use you to care for people and help people. He says, "Don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

I remember years ago when my son was seven. One of our sons, he looked me in the eye, and we were going to bed, and he said, "Dad, let me ask you something. When I get older, how am I going to be able to know God's will for my life?" What a great question that demands an answer.

Proverbs 3:5 and 6 says, “Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” The question that I want to basically kind of work here, I want to show you a few things that the Lord reveals or uses in order to reveal his will and straighten up our path.

The first thing that he uses is his Word. God reveals his will in his Word. I know that some of you, you heard me last week appeal to you to read the Bible every day. Let me just encourage you with something. This is totally fresh. You're ready? I want to encourage you to read the Bible every day, okay? It is the Word of God. The Word of God. It's so important. “All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, and rebuking, and correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The man of God, the woman of God, every good word. That means that there is not a situation that you can go through on Earth that the Bible can't help you with this. It informs everything in life.

It is such a gift that he's given to us, and so many people in the world, they don't even have it in their own translation. They can't read it. But let me tell you something. We're no better off if we have it and don't read it. He wants to inform our lives, and he's given us a Bible.

I know that our culture, our culture says, “Listen, just listen to your heart. Give your heart all authority, full authority.” Ask yourself, has your heart ever wanted something that proved to be not so good for you? You know, the Bible talks about our heart this way. It says, “The heart is deceitful above all things.” It lies to us every day.

I want you to know that God did not give you feelings and emotions to determine what is true, and what is noble, and what is right. He gave you feelings and emotions to be able to applaud and to abhor what he says is true, and what is noble, and what is right.

What's interesting is the Word of God begins to prioritize things in our life. In fact, if you just notice, like Paul is saying, this is how the gospel applies to life. He could have talked about anything, but what does he do? He applies it to priorities.

The very next passage is about marriage. If you're married, seek him first and then seek your spouse second. Build a great marriage. What's next? Parenting, relationships between children and parents. What's next? Work, having a job, because that's a platform where we get to display the creativity and excellence of God in the way that we do our work with gifts that he's given us. What's after that? He talks about ministry, caring for other people, investing our lives in others, praying for others, praying that the Word would go forth and then taking that Word to the ends of the earth. These are the priorities that he gives, you understand, but we have to read his Word to understand them.

The second way that he does this is he reveals his will by his Spirit. It's beautiful that in the Old Testament God dwelt above us and then when Jesus came, he dwelt next to us, but then once Jesus rose from the dead and we trust him as savior and Lord, the Spirit of God dwells in us. This is proof that God is moving towards us, not further from us. You see, when we trust Jesus Christ, this is true of you and me. Ephesians chapter 1 verse 13, "When you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him." That means if you trusted Jesus Christ, what happened to you? "You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. The promised Holy Spirit.

If you know Christ, the Spirit lives within you, and the Spirit actually directs your course, straightens out your path. How does he do it? Well, Jesus said when he was on the earth, this is how the Holy Spirit is going to do it. When he comes, "He will convict the world of sin and righteousness and justice, and judgment." Let's talk about each one of these.

He convinced the world of sin. How many of you, if you've ever done something that was clearly sin, you felt bad about it? You don't have to raise your hand. Just, yeah, yeah. Okay. Well, that's the Holy Spirit speaking to you, straightening out your path. His greatest love is when he's no longer angry with you, and so just imagine you sinning and him not telling you that you're moving in the wrong place. When you feel guilty, when you feel convicted over something that you've done, well, that's the Holy Spirit speaking to you and saying, "Hey, I want to straighten out your course. You're getting off course."

But then he goes on and he says, and not only of sin, he says that he convicts us of righteousness. How many of you have ever done something that was clearly the right thing, it was a merciful thing, a generous thing, a compassionate thing, you served somebody and then you came away and you just felt like that was so worthwhile? Like you just feel like that was so right. That was so good. Well, that's the Holy Spirit speaking to you. He's convicting you of righteousness. He's confirming his pleasure in you. He's saying, "That was the right thing."

This is how the Spirit speaks to us. Then if you've ever in your life ever thought, "You know what? When I finish here, I'm going to stand before the Lord," and that's a sobering thought, well, that's the Spirit of God speaking to you, reminding you that judgment, sitting before Jesus Christ and being held accountable for all of our life, it's coming. This is how the Spirit of God speaks to you, and this is how he speaks to me.

Now, here's an amazing thing. The Bible repeatedly uses the metaphor of fire when describing the Holy Spirit. Now, you guys have all seen fire. It needs a few things. It needs heat. It needs oxygen. It needs fuel. Fire, right, when you ignore the fire, it tends to dim, and when you feed the fire, it tends to grow.

You notice what he says here. He says, “And do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.” Now, he’s really not talking about wine and alcohol. He’s using wine as an illustration. Wine and the Holy Spirit have one thing in common, and that is they both have an influential effect upon our life when we consume them, when we’re filled with them. They change our vision of reality.

What does he say? He says, “Don’t be intoxicated by anything else in the world.” He said, “Be filled or be controlled by the Holy Spirit.” Then he tells us precisely how this fire can be fanned in such a way so that the Spirit of God is speaking louder to us instead of quieter.

The words I-N-G in verse 19 through 21, there’s four of them. You see addressing one another, giving thanks, singing and making melody, and submitting to one another. These are called participles, and a participle simply helps you get the verb accomplished. The verb is be filled with the Holy Spirit. Fan the flame so that the Spirit of God will speak louder to you.

Okay, how do I do that? This is how. You address one another with singing hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs. You know what that means? That means you come to a place just like you did, and here’s what happens. When you were singing that song, maybe you are the one who were really discouraged today and you looked around and you saw somebody else singing and it encouraged your heart, because it says, “You know what? I may not feel like it today, but I know that there’s hope in Jesus Christ.” You’re mutually edifying one another, and what is that doing? It’s fanning the flame.

He also says you need to make melody in your own heart. What that means is that when we’re singing to the Lord, there’s not only a horizontal effect, there’s a vertical effect. We’re saying, “God, you’re worthy and I need you more than anything.” We’re singing to the Lord for each other and for him and for us.

Then he goes on and he says, “You know what? We want to be thanking God.” We want to take stock of our life and think about all the blessings of our life that are better than immediate death and hell. Anything that’s better than that, we should pause and say, “God, I want to thank you for that.”

Then he says, “You know what? We should be submitting to one another.” What that means is that we look to each other and we care about each other’s needs and not just our own. We yield ourself to others to serve other people. In all of these ways, what’s happening is the Spirit of God within our heart, it’s like the fire that’s being fanned, and it’s getting brighter, and brighter, and brighter, hotter and hotter, and louder and louder to our ears and to our heart. Where he’s convicting us of sin, and righteousness, and judgment.

But here's the deal. Coming to church, addressing one another, singing, making melody in our heart, thanking God, submitting to one another, they all require margin in life. They all require space, time. Some of us, we don't do those things because we don't give time because we don't have the time. Yet, those are deeply important things if you're to know the will of God for your life.

Well, one other category that he uses is God reveals his will with his provisions. His provisions. You know, he's given you gifts and abilities that accord with his plan for your life. You know, some of you, you should never build a bridge, right? Because he has not given you mathematical skill and ability. You don't have to waste any time doing that. You let somebody else do that. It's a clue that's not for you, okay? Some of you, you can't sing, and so you shouldn't cut an album, right? You shouldn't give yourself to that because that's not his plan for your life. Not only does he give us gifts, and skills, and abilities, interests, he also gives us friends to tell us and confirm, is that really a gift, and a skill, and an ability, right? A friend is honest, really honest. A friend cares that we walk in God's path more than not offending us.

Not only that is he gives us opened and closed doors. Sometimes we're like, "Okay, I'm supposed to be an engineer. I want to apply for this job," and you don't get the job. Well, you just need to trust and say, "God, I'm looking to you and I'm just trusting. I'm just trusting you."

Let me encourage you to be diligent to seek the Lord's direction. As you do this, let me encourage you with something that's so important. It gives me so much hope. This is perhaps the greatest thing that gives us hope, me hope is this. I always find more hope in the process that I go through to make a decision than whatever I ended up actually deciding.

Let me explain that to you, okay? There's been times in my life where I have a decision to make. Sometimes it's for me, sometimes it's for us. I just look at it and I say, "Let's do this," and I make a decision without consulting the Lord. I don't know if you've ever done that before, made a decision without consulting the Lord. Then what happens is time passes and you get into a situation, and you made the decision and now you're in a situation and sometimes there's good days, and sometimes there's bad days. But it's interesting is that when there's good days, you think, "Man, I made such a good decision," and when it's bad days, we think, "Man, I made such a bad decision."

But if you will do what God says, he says, "Trust in me. Lean on me. Acknowledge me, and I'll direct your paths." If you'll give time, and here's what I mean by it gives me more hope, the process that I go through. If you give the Lord an opportunity to say, "Okay, God, I have to make a decision. You know this is before me, and I'm coming before you." The bigger decision, the more time, the more intensity. I want to talk to other believers. I want to pray. I want to open the scriptures. I need clarity. I need wisdom.

This is what happens. You make a decision after seeking the Lord as the priority of your life, and this is what happens. You get down the road and you're going to have some days that are really good and some days that are really bad, but here's the difference. On the days that are really bad, if you can remember a time in your life and you gave the creator of the universe who promised that he would direct your path an opportunity to speak to you, then you could assume that the bad days that you're going through is not because you made a bad decision, but because God is allowing you to go through a difficulty in order to refine your character, and so you can endure in it. You can use it as a platform even to help other people who are thinking, "I need to jump ship."

See, this is what happens when people live their life not seeking the Lord. What typically happens is they become butterfly jumpers in marriage, in relationship, in churches, at work, and they jump from one thing to the next to the next every time it gets hot enough to be refined, because they think, "You know what? I never had an opportunity to hear God said, 'I'm planting you right here. Now, excel in this land until I move you.'" I urge you to seek the Lord with your decisions.

Last, God urges us to redeem our time doing his will. He says, "Look carefully how you walk, making the best use of the time." Some of your translations, instead of saying making, it says redeem the time or redeem the best use of the time. It's a financial word. It means spend your time on something of equal or value as your limited commodity of minutes, and moments, and opportunities.

You see, we all tend to be very wasteful when we perceive excess, which is why the Bible repeatedly tells us things like, "You're a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." He wants us to see the urgency of our days.

Let me ask you something. If you actually knew without a shadow of a doubt that you had 100 days left to live, what would you do with those 100 days? I know you don't know that, but what if you did? It would cause you, wouldn't it, to think, "You know what? I don't have excess to be wasting, and so I need to be intentional with all of them." That's how he wants us to live, because the days are evil.

Paul doesn't use the word *chronos*, which is a Greek word that we translate time in terms of units of time like minute, seconds, moments, hours, days. He uses *kairos*, which is the word for opportunity. In other words, God not only gives us days, he gives us priorities. He also gives us windows of opportunity to invest into those priorities. But here's the deal. We must have the margin in our life to redeem those opportunities, because windows open and windows close.

You know, some of you right now, I want you to know, you think, "I have all the time in the world to trust Christ." I want you to know that that window one day will close. Trust him today. Some of you, you have a child who wants to throw a ball with you. Let me tell you something. The day is coming they're not going to ask again. Redeem the time. Some of you have an opportunity to tell your parents right now, "I love you." One day that window is going to close, so tell them today. There is a window to care for widows, and to share the gospel, and to go on a mission trip, and to tell people who've never heard about Jesus, and then those windows, they close, so redeem the time when you can.

Let me encourage you to prepare to act on windows of opportunity. You notice I say prepared to act, and this is why. A person with no margin in their life will not only struggle to see opportunities because they're so busy they can't even see opportunities in front of them, but even if they see them, they won't be able to respond to them because they have no room in time. Let me encourage you to take some time to consider the broken world in which you live, to evaluate your life and your priorities, to identify one wasteful usage of time and eliminate it all for the glory of God.

Let me pray. Father in heaven, we look to you now in faith and we ask that you would direct our paths. I pray for those in particular this week who are making significant life decisions. Would you cause them to look to you, and would you direct their path? Would you use your Word? Would you use your Spirit? Would you use people? Would you use even an open or closed door? Would you direct us as your people? Now Father, as we sing to you and as we give, we want to do so out of an overflow of joy that you have planted within our heart. We look to you in faith. We sing to you, for you're worthy. You're the greatest hope, the only hope that we have, so we sing of that hope now. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.



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